

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM GOVERNING BOARD

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a meeting of the **Brown County Neville Public Museum Governing Board** was held at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 13, 2011 at the Neville Public Museum, 210 Museum Place, Green Bay, Wisconsin

PRESENT: Kramer Rock, Bob Jossie, Jesse Brunette, Pat Wetzel

EXCUSED: Kevin Kuehn, Kyle Hoops

ALSO

PRESENT: Rolf Johnson, Jean Hermes

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Kramer Rock called the meeting to order at 4:50

2. **APPROVE/MODIFY AGNEDA**

Motion made by Jesse Brunette and seconded by Pat Wetzel to approve the agenda. Vote taken. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. **APPROVE/MODIFY MINUTES of March 14, 2011**

Motion made by Pat Wetzel and seconded by Jesse Brunette to approve. Vote taken. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. **REVIEW/MODIFY SUMMARY of May 9, 2011.**

Motion made by Pat Wetzel and seconded by Kramer Rock to approve. Vote taken. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. **Director's Report**

Rolf reported on work related to reviewing the Governance Model for the museum. He informed the board that there is discussion going on regarding the changing view of Governance throughout the museum industry, as reflected in session topics at the 2011 AAM meeting. An organizational chart was distributed which reflects the current organization structure of the Neville. Rolf pointed out that this is not the most efficient way for the museum to "do business", including everything from facilitating operations, interactions with county employees and the very important and growing relationship with the Foundation. Rolf, as a point of reference, asks if anyone at the meeting would like to discuss this matter further, since he has asked for an internal review of museum governance by the County Executive and Museum Foundation, and believes the distributed org chart adequately reflects the current situation here. Discussion of the organizational chart follows.

Later in the meeting Rolf will ask for feedback in terms of his interactions with, and reporting to the Governing Board. Rolf is also trying to change the interaction he has (versus that of his predecessor) with the County's Ed & Rec Committee and is trying to restructure that relationship. Further explanation of the flow chart ensues.

Rolf observes that he is generating a lot of "parallel reports" that have virtually the same data. He believes this process is complex and overly complicated as well as taking inordinate amounts of time. There seems to be a recognition that we could do things to improve the actual reporting structure and streamline how these bodies (the Ed & Rec Committee, the Museum Foundation and the Governing Board) interact together, ideally through the office of the Museum Director.

Rolf realizes that the Foundation employees, as a complement to County staff, are doing critical work; not only helping the Foundation Board take care of financial reports etc. but they are also doing the marketing for the Museum. Community members and stakeholders Rolf has interacted with during his first three months here have identified marketing is a "weak link in the chain," and he feels that the Governing board should be made more aware of this issue given the implications for earned revenue and attendance at the institution.

Rolf defers to Kramer regarding the internal analysis and assessment of governance that is now occurring on the part of the Foundation. The County Executive is aware that this analysis is occurring, with the goal of better defining possible governance changes moving forward.

Kramer feels that there is ambiguity within the community in terms of the "go to" person for the Museum. He wants to assure that we are not paving a road forward that no one knows about. The Foundation is therefore evaluating the concept that there should be one face representing the museum to go out in the community. In the model being explored, the Museum Director would also wear the hat of non-compensated CEO of the Foundation. This would allow a permeable membrane between the two entities where the Director goes back and forth in his work between the Museum (i.e. Brown County) and Foundation. He is not suggesting that the primary responsibility of fund raising falls on the Director because that would be an unfair burden. The Foundation is still looking for a Development Director and is conducting interviews. They believe that they have a good candidate for the position.

Adopting this governance model would let the public (and potential funders) know that the Director of the Museum is also the head of the Foundation. Bob Jossie questions if that means that the Director would directly report to the Foundation. Kramer states that this is not the case and that's why they are trying to stay away from any elected official or public person questioning whether or not taxpayer money is going to the Foundation. The Foundation is trying to convey the symbolism of this reorganization while still maintaining a distinction between the work being done for both entities. Symbolically, within the community there would be a clearer understanding that the Museum Director represents the "whole" Museum, i.e. he's the head of the Foundation's support activities and the Director of the Museum's operations.

In reality, Rolf would do what would normally be done on a daily and annual basis anyway: go out with the fund raising person on requests, but not have to initiate everything related to fundraising. Kramer wants to make sure that the elected officials don't sense that tax payers are funding the Foundation's activities. Foundation staff at the Museum would still report to the Board of Directors of the Foundation eliminating any paper shuffling, annual revues, liability etc. on the part of the Museum Director.

Rolf adds that this can help to clarify and strengthen the public/private partnership between the County and the Foundation. You can have this segregation of the two entities but in effect you're running integrated operations through one office. Rolf believes this will clarify, for the general public, that there is one person you can go to in order to find out what is happening in the Museum, not only on a daily basis but strategically one or two years from now. If pursued, this new governance model can be put into effect on a one-year, trial basis. A new org chart will need to be developed to show this new relationship between Museum and Foundation.

One additional motivation for the above analysis is coming from the County Executive, who has encouraged Rolf and the Board of the Foundation to develop some alternative governance models that he can look at. The Executive is trying to figure out the best path forward for sustaining the Museum, from maintaining the status quo to becoming an enterprise like the Zoo or completely privatizing the Museum.

Rolf notes that there was a fundraising committee meeting at the Museum last week and at that time, by their own admission, the members admitted to working tactically rather than strategically on development. Given the collective need to change this approach, a new development strategy needs to be created from the Director's office, in-concert with the Foundation.

Kramer feels that the Foundation should hire someone for the Development Director position who is already connected to the local, philanthropic community, who can get out, get the doors open, and approach people known to be potential donators to the Museum.

Jesse states that he likes the governance change idea and has always felt the Foundation role to be confusing as it relates to the government (County) role in support of the Museum. However, he is concerned that the Ed & Rec Committee and the County Board may perceive this new idea as a threat and understands that more research into the legalities of a changed relationship, and the role of the Museum Director, is necessary. He also believes that the previous Director's management style was that of a "nine-to-five" person and he feels Rolf's strengths are much more suited to the extra work that this new governance model would entail.

Rolf would like to see someone hired for the Foundation development position as soon as possible so that he can act on the connections that he is already making and that they will also make for him.

Pat Wetzel likes the idea of a “Museum guy” that is recognized as the go to person for these important development tasks.

Rolf proceeds with his Director’s Report and talks about operational highlights since the last Governing Board meeting. He discusses productive meetings with the County Executive. He mentions the take-home message that the County Executive gave to all of the County Department Heads, which was to expect the budgets for the next two years to be very challenging, referencing a minimum \$3.5 million shortfall for FY 2012. The County Executive is on record as saying that he really would like to drop the FY 2012 budget down to save \$5 million (i.e. an additional \$1.5 million) with a goal of being able to reinvest the initial savings back into capacity building. Rolf has also met internally with County “cluster groups” to look for efficiencies and collaborative ideas from fellow Department Heads. For example, the Harbor Commission is interested in telling the story of the port. Rolf sees the Museum involved in this project. Rolf will articulate services to other County departments (e.g. marketing) that the Museum could supply.

Rolf thanks Kramer Rock for the tremendous amount of time and energy that he has given to Rolf the last couple of months bringing Rolf up-to-speed. The fact that we are being tactical in our approach now - and need to turn quickly to working strategically - is stressed. Rolf has been approached by all kinds of people asking how they can help the museum. Example: Voyager Magazine, a history publication, has allowed us to place a half page ad marketing two museum exhibits (Badger Boys and Green Bay A to Z). We have paid for the ad up front and the magazine has written a check back to us to pay for the ad.

One of the things Rolf would like to do with Arketype is to have them help us develop a “reintroduction” campaign, i.e. to reintroduce the Neville Museum to our audiences. We need to reintroduce the Neville to the general public, stakeholders and politicians. Jesse Brunette agreed. Rolf has also engaged in a fair amount of public outreach including the Harbor Commission meeting and the port related work, the Optimist club, two Kiwanis meetings, the Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, Retired Federal Employees and other assorted one-on-one meetings. Rolf credits Foundation members in helping connect him to people he should meet. Rolf plans to meet and greet as many people as possible over the next few months to talk about what might be happening at the Museum as we move forward.

Rolf is also in the process of reviewing internal policies, standard operating procedures and problems that we are already running into. He gives an example of the current fee sheet. He asks for the Foundation’s help in creating better vehicles (e.g. events) for earned revenue generation. Rolf feels that we are not at the price point for the market. Also, he is finding himself in hard but productive negotiations with the UW-GB, Learning in Retirement group. The Museum loves the number of people attending but very few are members and they do not pay an additional admission fee. Rolf feels we are giving them “a steal” on room rental. Rolf asks the Foundation to work with him on this and other activities with earned revenue potential. Rolf is reviewing existing policies and needs to make recommendations to the Governing Board, Ed & Rec, and the Foundation to improve and develop said policies.

The staff is currently in a mode of “quantity over quality,” turning out exhibit after exhibit. What we need to do moving forward is to concentrate on quality and impact. Program evaluations and exhibit evaluations are now in progress.

Rolf notes his request with the County for ticketing software and the need for demographic data as we make programmatic changes.

Other evaluations include space assessments for all our rooms and how they can be better utilized.

Rolf is very pleased with his interactions with the Ed and Rec Committee. Jesse agrees there is a good relation with the committee.

Rolf feels that the “Community Listening Session” scheduled for Tuesday, June 14 is a key element in reintroducing the community to the Museum. The session is a positive way to look into the future of the Museum while engendering community buy-in and support.

Jesse reports that the agenda includes ED & Rec role call, Governing Brd. role call, Board of Directors of the Museum Foundation role call. Jesse will make some introductory comments and then gather information from members of the public concerning the future development of the Neville Public Museum, with follow up questions from panel members. The notice regarding the session is out to the public and Jesse hopes for a good turn out. Kramer is concerned questions will be awkward for the general public. Jesse states that he will be the facilitator and steer the conversation in the right direction. If the conversation becomes misguided, Jesse will go back to the premise that it is actually a listening session and no formal action will be taken.

Rolf feels that one thing that should be discussed a little more before the session are the mechanics and format of the meeting. If you plan to record the session, do you want people to actually come up and talk into a microphone or if people should give written questions that the moderator then reads. Rolf wants to make sure all Committee members are on the same page in terms of a process that needs to be generic at this stage of the game. He reaffirms that there will be many community feedback sessions like this moving forward as a permanent evaluation tool of the museum. Carol Jones informed Rolf that Harry Maier will attend the listening session. The session, pre-session and post-session will be videotaped. This will enable us to report the process to the rest of the museum industry.

Bob Jossie likes the idea but cautions not to expect a lot of people to attend. Because of a prior commitment, Bob will not be able to attend.

Rolf reports that the 2011 American Association of Museums’ conference that he attended in Houston was very worthwhile. There was a lot of talk about governance, the use and application of social media, skill sets required for museum staff in the future, leading people through change and allowing them to take risks. By their own admission, the museum’s staff is feeling the need to change the way they approach their work and

Rolf needs to figure out how to encourage them in appropriate ways to prepare for the changes coming and to be willing to take risks with new program ideas.

Rolf will talk to the Foundation about exciting information he learned about how to increase membership by changing the way we structure membership options. He attended many sessions geared toward CEOs and Directors, which reinforced the fact that many of the issues being faced by the Neville are also being faced by other museums. Rolf is very anxious to talk to the group about ideas for getting museum visitors on-the-water (an idea shared by Kramer) which would add to the earned revenue potential for the museum, as well as programmatically pushing us beyond the walls of the institution. In addition Rolf stated that we have good exhibits running but they are not necessarily great. Rolf has talked to the curators regarding this and has already begun brainstorming ways in which we can add to the exhibits after they open to make them more fun and engaging. The team has reviewed Alive in Wood and Green Bay A-Z as test cases. Two exhibits coming up are the Port of Green Bay exhibit and the 30 year retrospective for Art Street. Last but not least, all educational programming is under review including curriculum based (in the classroom) to smaller "traditional programs" run by the Museum, as well as outreach efforts. Curatorial research is on "auto pilot" for now pending subsequent review by staff.

6. ACCEPT DIRECTOR'S REPORT AS PRESENTED

Motion made by Bob Jossie and seconded by Jesse Brunette to accept. Vote taken.
MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Kramer Rock and seconded by Jesse Brunette to adjourn at 5:45 p.m.
Vote taken. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Hermes

Next Meeting
Monday—July 11, 2011
4:30 p.m.